

Preventing Problems after Surgery Education Plan

Getting Ready to Learn About Preventing Problems after Surgery

Learning something new can be hard. It is even harder if you are not feeling well. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to review the following information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who you want to learn with you. We would like to have someone who will be helping you at home learn with you.
- The best way for you to learn. Do you learn best by reading a book or pamphlet, or by doing things yourself?
- If you are not feeling well, if you are in pain or you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to your health. We may explain something more than once. We will be giving you information in small bits over several days.

What I Need to Learn About Preventing Problems After Surgery

By the time I leave the hospital I will be able to tell the staff how I can:

1. Prevent breathing problems
2. Control my pain
3. Stop a blood clot from forming
4. Keep my incision from becoming infected
5. Keep myself from falling while I am in the hospital
6. Prevent a urinary tract infection.
7. Identify the symptoms of a urinary tract infection.
8. Explain why the staff is monitoring my blood sugar

The staff will use three questions and answers to teach me about Preventing Problems After Surgery:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat back important points in my own words, or ask me to show what I have learned. They want to make sure that I know about preventing complications after surgery.

What is my main problem?

Because I have just had surgery, I need to keep myself safe and prevent problems like:

- Pneumonia
- Blood clots
- Infection
- Falling in the hospital

Limited activity, medications, feeling weak, and pain can cause problems. The staff will teach me ways I can prevent these problems.

What do I need to do?

I will be able to tell the staff how I will prevent breathing problems.

Take deep breaths and cough

- I should take a deep breath in and then cough deeply 10 times every 1-2 hours while awake.
- If I have pain when I cough, I can hold a pillow or rolled-up blanket against my chest or stomach, and apply pressure as I cough.
- Use the incentive spirometer to check how deep I am able to take in a breath.

Use the incentive spirometer every two hours while I am awake.

1. Breathe out (exhale) normally.
2. Place the mouthpiece in my mouth. Seal my lips around the mouthpiece.
3. Breathe in (inhale) slowly and deeply through my mouth with my lips closed tightly on the mouthpiece. I may need to hold my nose closed. Keep breathing in until I reach my goal. My nurse and I set my goal.
4. After I breathe in as deeply as I can, I hold my breath for at least 3 seconds.
5. Take the mouthpiece out of my mouth and breathe out normally.

6. Repeat these steps as instructed, usually 5-10 times over 2 hours while awake. **Take my time.** Take a few normal breaths between deep breaths.
7. Record how deep a breath I can take

Get out of bed and move about as soon as possible

- Changing my position helps me to be able to breathe deeper. This prevents breathing problems and improves the blood flow in my legs.
- My doctor will tell me how much I can do
- I need to be as active as soon as possible after surgery. I may be helped to walk as soon as 4 hours after surgery.
- I need to call for help to get out of bed.
- I will need to get out of bed at least 3-4 times a day.

I will be able to tell the staff how I will manage my pain from my surgery.

- Tell my nurse if I am in pain. I need to control my pain in order to breathe deeply
- The nurse will ask me to rate my pain on a scale of 0-10. If I don't know how to rate my pain, the nurse will show me a picture of the scale.
- Ask for pain medicine before my level of pain gets too bad.
- Take the pills my doctor ordered for me

Safety with pain medications

- I will not drive if I am taking pain pills that make me drowsy
- I will tell my doctor if I am taking aspirin or another blood thinner
- I will only take the pain medication my doctor has told me to take.

I will be able to tell the staff how I will stop a blood clot.

Perform ankle exercises

- Doing ankle exercises will improve the blood flow in my legs and prevent blood clots.
- I will show the nurse how I do ankle exercises:
 - Lie on back with legs straight and flat.

- Move my ankles by pointing toes toward foot of the bed and then point my toes towards my knee.
- Trace circles in the air with each foot.
- I will do these exercises 3-5 times every 1-2 hours after surgery until I am walking 100 feet three times a day

TED Hose

- I may have elastic stockings (TED hose) or inflatable wraps on my legs.

I will be able to tell the staff how I will prevent an infection of my incision.

- My doctor may order an antibiotic for me before and after surgery.
- I will wash my hands before eating and after I use the toilet.
- I will ask my visitors to wash their hands.
- I will remind the staff to wash their hands if they don't.
- I won't touch my incision or bandages.
- I will avoid people when they are sick.
- I won't sleep with my pets.

I will be able to tell the staff how I will prevent a fall.

- I will ask for help before getting out of bed after surgery
- I will wear socks or slippers with rubber soles
- I will keep my call light close by to use when I need help

I will be able to tell the staff what I need to do to prevent a urinary tract infection.

- Ask your healthcare team each day if you still need your catheter.
- Make sure your catheter tubing is secure to your leg or belly.
- Check that all hospital staff wash or clean their hands before and after touching your catheter.
- Make sure that anyone touching your tube or bag wears gloves.
- Do not tug, pull or twist the catheter tubing.
- Always keep your urine drain bag below the level of your bladder or hips and off the floor.

- Do not take apart the catheter from the drain tube. This is an infection risk.

I will be able to tell the staff the symptoms of a urinary tract infection?

- Burning or pain in the lower abdomen (below the stomach).
- Fever
- Bloody urine
- After the tube is removed:
 - Burning during urination
 - Increase in the need to urinate

I will be able to tell the staff why they are checking my blood sugar.

- My body may recover faster and fight infection better if my blood sugar is at a healthy level for me.
- My blood sugar may be checked even if I do not have diabetes.
- My blood sugar may be checked when I arrive at the hospital and after surgery.

Why is this important to me?

Having surgery and being in pain might make it hard for me to breathe deeply. Doing the deep breathing and coughing and getting out of bed will help to keep me from getting pneumonia. Having my pain controlled and being active will also help prevent a blood clot. Using good hand washing, preventing falls and having a healthy blood sugar keeps me safe and may get me home sooner.

As part of my care and to help me understand my care after surgery, I have received the Preventing Problems after Surgery Education Plan. I may also receive:

- Preventing Problems after Surgery handout
- It's OK to Ask brochure
- Managing your Blood Sugar Levels During Your Hospital Stay brochure
- Preventing an Incision Infection flyer
- Surgery at Bronson Methodist Hospital brochure

Preventing Problems after Surgery Education Plan

Resources for Staff

- [Lexicomp - Deep Vein Thrombosis](#)
- [Mosby's Nursing Consult - Evidence-Based Nursing Monographs - Deep Vein Thrombosis](#)
- Bronson Policy & Procedure Manual

Teaching Tools (Items given to the patient)

- Preventing Problems after Surgery Education Plan
- [Surgery at Bronson](#)
- It's OK to Ask
- [Managing Your Blood Sugar Levels During Your Hospital Stay](#)

Content of Teaching: See Education Plan

Always close each teaching session with the question, “What questions do you have for me?”

References:

- AORN Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices 2010, Prevention of Venous Stasis, 631-648.
- Mosby's Nursing Consult Deep Vein Thrombosis Monograph
- Nursing C-78 Glycemic Screening Policy & Guideline
- Nursing J-01 Instructing Patient in Cough and Deep Breathing Procedure
- Nursing J-02 Use of Incentive Spirometer (IS) Procedure
- Nursing K-02 Postoperative Leg and Foot Exercises (“Ankle Pumps”) Procedure
- Nursing K-20 Application of Sequential Compression Device (SCD) Procedure

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